

Chapter 6 - Section 1

DEER CREEK UNION CHAPEL, the first church built in the Greenbank Community, was situated on the south side of Hospital Run, near a large spring. It stood in the center of the old part of what is now the Arborvale Cemetery. The exact date that the church was built is not known. However, the following facts show that it must have been built at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. These lands were originally a part of a 120 Acre tract granted by patent to James Rucker in the year 1783; James Rucker conveyed the same to William Dysard; and on Sept 7, 1800, William Dysard conveyed the same to Jacob Rumbaugh of Augusta County. April 8, 1806 Jacob Rumbaugh conveyed to Jacob Gillispie 13 of the said 120 Acres, which is the eastern end of the tract. The west line or end of the 13 Acres is now the line of the original "meeting house lot"; but in this record bearing date of 1806, there is no mention of a church or of passing a meeting house lot. On June 12, 1812, Jacob Rumbaugh conveyed to James Tallman two tracts of land.

The name of James Tallman first appears in the land records of Pocahontas County, then Bath County, Va., in a deed bearing date Sept. 9, 1795, recorded in Deed Book # page 173, in Bath County Clerks Office, and is a conveyance of 195 Acres to James Tallman by James Rucker. This tract of land is situated on the west side of the above 120 Acre tract that this church was built upon.

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This old church could not have been erected before 1795 and perhaps not before 1812, because James Tallman was instrumental in building the church and he did not own any of the land prior to these dates. It has been said that Jacob Rumbaugh sold the land to a Committee and, if that is true, he had to make the sale between 1800 and 1812, as that was the duration of his ownership of the lands. However, James Tallman made the deed on July 5, 1831 to Benj. Tallman, James Wooddell, and George Burner, Trustees of the Deer Creek Union Chapel for a tract of 1 A. 1 rd. and 34 poles, situated on Back Creek a fork of Deer Creek and a branch of Greenbrier River, being a part of a tract purchased of Jacob Rumbaugh and joining the lands of James McKesny. It is a well known fact that this church was erected many years before the date of this deed. In the cases of most of the early churches, we find that the churches were built and the deeds to the land made sometimes years afterwards.

This church was used by all denominations until they built churches of their own and then, after the erection of other churches in the Community, the people would go back to the old log church and hold their camp meetings. The last meeting was held in the year of 1858.

In the Session Books of the "Church at the Head of Greenbrier" (now Liberty), I find the following mention:

Sept. 22, 1844

Session convened at Deer Creek Union Church and was

R. D. McCutcheon, A. G. Mathews, Benj. Tallman, and Boon Tallman.

Sept. 25, 1846

Session convened at Union Church and was opened with prayer by Rev. Joseph Brown.

Baptisms:

A. G. Mathews, one child named Andrew Warwick

R. D. McCutcheon, one child named Robert Luther

R. B. Tallman, one child named Mary Alice

Elders present: R. D. McCutcheon, A. G. Mathews, and Benj. Tallman.

June 30, 1850

Session met at Deer Creek Union Church.

This was a small church about 30 x 40 ft. and stood east and west fronting toward the east. The pulpit was very high. The upstairs gallery was carried to near the center of the building which made room for a congregation upstairs as well as downstairs. There was no chimney in the church and how it was heated seems to be a mystery to the people of today. It is more than likely that no services were held during the most severe weather.

The Deer Creek Union Chapel was the only church in the eastern end of the county for a period of about forty years. People came here from the Upper Greenbrier or Upper Tract, later Travelers Repose, and as far west as Buzzards Creek, beyond Warwick and later known as Dunmore.

In that day everyone would go to "meeting" and the

church was called the "meeting house". The lot was quoted in the land records as the "meeting house lot". The people generally took a basket of dinner and spent the day in worship and in meeting and greeting their friends.

When the Confederate soldiers were camped on the top of Allegheny Mountain, in the year 1861, the soldiers came down and took all the ceiling from the church and hauled it to the top of the mountain to ceil their winter cabins.

The old church stood until the year of 1866. One day in that year Brown M. Yeager went inside and cut some kindling from one of the pine logs. That same night there was a terrific wind storm and a terrible crash was heard. The next morning it was discovered that the old log church had blown down. The church evidently had not been used for many years before that.

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